

his CCP constantly show us that their view of denying their own people's freedom at home and disrupting other countries' freedom through the Indo-Pacific has two goals that actually go hand in hand. For thugs and dictators, repression at home and aggression abroad are two sides of the same coin.

So when we see the mismanagement and dysfunction from regimes like Putin's and Xi's, the answer is not—for America and our allies to relax our vigilance, pull inward, or pay less attention to our global interests; the answer is to increase our vigilance, redouble our strength, and keep our friends and partners even closer.

The Biden administration's statement yesterday on the Chinese people's protest was actually too tepid. But what we need are not just stronger short-term words but stronger long-term actions and strategies.

The support that America and our friends have provided to Ukraine has not just been an act of philanthropy to an innocent people who deserve help fighting off the invaders; it is also bringing major benefits to the United States and our partners in the most practical terms.

In the course of fighting for their homes and families, the brave people of Ukraine are seriously degrading the abilities of one of the free world's greatest self-appointed adversaries to deal out violence. Putin and other wannabe tyrants the world over are learning that the cost-benefit calculus to bullying and bloodshed doesn't look like they thought it would.

The importance of this deterrence goes beyond just Europe. China has spent decades investing steadily in military technologies that increase threats to U.S. forces and our allies in the region. The CCP has steadily built military installations in the South China Sea, like a bully standing on a street corner, trying to grab control over international waters and shipping lanes. China has spent years methodically building up the very capabilities it would need to seize Taiwan by force if its people refuse to bend the knee, as we have already seen them do in Hong Kong.

So clearly we need to invest in our own strength, in our own alliances, in our own military modernization and defense industrial base.

The United States needs a strong, well-equipped military capable of preserving the strategic advantage and projecting power anywhere in the world. We need allies and partners willing to invest in their own capabilities. We need our private sector and our partners to understand that free peoples ought to be doing more trading among ourselves but be a lot more careful locating their capital and their employees in a repressed country that disregards basic freedoms and steals intellectual property on an industrial scale.

We need a sufficient military industrial base to keep ourselves safe and re-

main the free world's arsenal—a win-win for our security and for our economy. Among other things, that means rebuilding munitions stockpiles and weapons inventories that have been allowed to atrophy since the end of the Cold War. It means not waiting to arm and train our partners until a bad actor has already started a war. It means not wasting American strength and credibility, as this administration has done by desperately chasing sweetheart deals with Iran and abandoning Afghanistan with no strategy.

Providing for the common defense is one of our basic duties here in Congress. The Democratic leader should have prioritized the National Defense Authorization Act months ago. I am glad we will finally be turning to this essential bill shortly. Strong funding and strong authorization for our national security should never have to be a partisan issue. I know our Democratic friends have internal disagreements about what level of funding our Armed Forces deserve, but Republicans can guarantee this much: Our side will keep standing strong for American security and American strength.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT— Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

CLUB Q SHOOTING

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, before the Thanksgiving break, I planned to use my time today to talk about the Respect for Marriage Act, with which the Presiding Officer has had such an important role playing, and I want to congratulate her on the incredible work that she has done to get this over the finish line, because we are on the verge of passing the Respect for Marriage Act in the U.S. Senate. It is a historic piece of legislation to ensure that if a same-sex or interracial couple marries in one State, that every State has to honor that marriage. The Federal Government has to honor that marriage as well.

There may be no right closer to the heart than marrying the one that you love, and Colorado understands that. And I was going to come down here to talk about how, over decades, my State has led the way on equality. We recognized civil unions in 2013. We banned conversion therapy in my State. We passed our own version of the Equality Act in Colorado.

I was going to come down here and tell you about how Colorado understands what equality has come to mean

in America in 2022, but in the last week, I have been reminded again just how far we have to go.

Last Sunday, Coloradans woke up to the news that Club Q—a loving, accepting, 20-year old LGBTQ club in Colorado Springs—had been the target of a mass shooting. Five Coloradans were killed, and at least 22 were injured.

In the days since, Coloradans have described Club Q as a center of community building, a place where everyone could be their true selves and live without fear.

Club Q's owner, Nic Grzecka, said he founded the club to “be that safe place for people to come and feel and understand that they are normal—that the way they feel is normal and there are people just like them.”

As a father, that is what I hope for my three daughters, and, as a former school superintendent, that is what I wish for the children that I worked for. We want our kids to feel normal and loved and like they belong.

But on November 19, these feelings of safety and acceptance that Club Q had built over two decades were shattered. On the same day that we recognized Trans Day of Remembrance, we added more names to the solemn toll in this country, when a violent young man, radicalized by hateful and divisive rhetoric, killed five people and forever changed a community, forever changed my State.

In minutes, he robbed from us brothers and sisters and daughters and sons, friends, and loved ones, who were there just being themselves, not bothering anybody.

He took from us Derrick Rump, a 38-year-old bartender and co-owner of Club Q, who bought groceries for others during the hardest 2 months of the pandemic; Daniel David Aston, 28 years old, a bar supervisor known as the “master of silliness” because of his contagious happiness and joy; Kelly Loving, 40 years old, who had just moved to Colorado and was trying to enjoy a weekend trip to Colorado Springs; Ashley Paugh, 35 years old, a devoted mother and nonprofit worker, who loved hunting and fishing, like so many other Coloradans, and was there to support the community; and Raymond Green Vance, 22 years old—22 years old—who grew up in Colorado Springs and had just started a new job and was saving up for his own apartment.

I am thinking of them and their families and all of those who survived this terrible tragedy in Colorado—people who imagined that there was one space that you could go to feel safe, and then this happens.

It fills me with rage that it happened. It fills me with sadness. It should fill the entire Senate with rage and sadness.

And if it weren't for the courage of people like Richard Fierro and Thomas James, the list of names I read, already too long, would have been longer.

Thomas James, a petty officer second class in the Navy, used his military crisis training to help subdue the